

## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

### **PROVINCE APPROVES NEW \$11.8-M SAANICH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**SAANICH** – The Province has approved a new \$11.8-million elementary school in North Saanich that will be built to high environmental standards, said Murray Coell, MLA for Saanich North and the Islands.

“Schools are the heart of our community, and this school was designed with the community in mind,” said Coell. “The collaboration that took place between the school board, community and First Nations community will provide students on the Saanich peninsula with a better place to learn.”

The new school has been designed according to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles. Environmental features of the school include:

- An anti-idling policy;
- Fresh air circulation through the classrooms;
- A plan to replace lost forest and bush habitat for wildlife; and
- Site drainage that runs away from the adjacent organic farm.

The green design of the new school supports the Province’s commitment towards sustainable environmental management, including more energy efficient schools as outlined in the recent throne speech.

“British Columbia has established a reputation for environmental leadership,” said Education Minister Shirley Bond. “This new elementary school builds on that leadership while providing students with increased educational opportunities in a state-of-the-art learning facility.”

The new elementary replaces two existing schools: Saanichton elementary and McTavish elementary. During the planning for the new school, the communities from Saanichton and McTavish schools were consulted extensively. As a result, community traffic concerns have been addressed by employing improved engineering of the entrance and exit to the parking lots, and a parent “Way to Go” committee has been formed to develop safe pedestrian access at the school and along surrounding streets and trails.

“The Saanich school board and all of our partners in education are delighted to receive approval for this new school, which will bring together the populations of Saanichton and McTavish elementary schools,” said MaryLynne Rimer, chair of the Saanich school board. “We commit to working with staff, students and families, as well as the Saanich Indian school board and the community at large, to create the best possible learning environment in our new school.”

Another design feature of the new school is the First Nations Cultural Centre. The Saanich school district has a strong relationship with its First Nations partners including the W'SANEC bands, the Saanich Indian school board and parents. This partnership will lead to First Nations culture and language programs in the new school that support all children and families.

"We are optimistic that the new school will provide an opportunity for our children to fully participate in all academic opportunities, while allowing us to share our culture because the groundwork for cultural communication that has been ongoing in Saanich schools will continue at McTavish," said Remi Paul, chair of the Saanich Indian school board. "To truly understand who the Saanich people are, our culture must be a part of everyday life and by allowing our children an opportunity to share who they are without historical prejudice, we may be able to look towards a shared future."

Since 2001, the Province has spent over \$1 billion to complete 26 new schools, 31 replacements, 140 additions and 30 renovations projects across British Columbia. By the end of 2008-09, the Province will have invested more than \$2.8 billion in school capital and maintenance projects.

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